

ABANDONED RAILROADS  
OF  
NORTH JERSEY



BY C.P. CALDES

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## ABANDONED RAILROADS OF NORTH JERSEY

From Bayonne to Edgewater, the west shore of the Hudson river was lined with hundreds of piers to service the millions of tons of cargo imported and exported to and from the worlds nations and America. To move these goods, hundreds of rail lines were constructed to efficiently transport the massive tonnage coming and going to the piers of Hudson and Bergen counties waterfront communities.

Jersey City alone had hundreds of miles of rails running to the Hudson river, with a multitude of railroad companies in competition for the huge profits to be had. Freighters could unload on any city dock and bang, off they went to any point in North America.. The same services were available from just about any dock on the west shore, making the North Jersey port area unique and extremely busy.

For many years the rails ruled, but nothing lasts forever as the railroads quickly discovered, it didn't take long for the motor truck to show it's worth. A few decades of competition was all it took for the railroads to drop to second place. A new order of transportation was at hand, trucks, cars, bus's and even airplanes had knocked the railroads for a loop. And with that, shrinkage set in, soon rails and buildings began to deteriorate, and then to totally disappear.

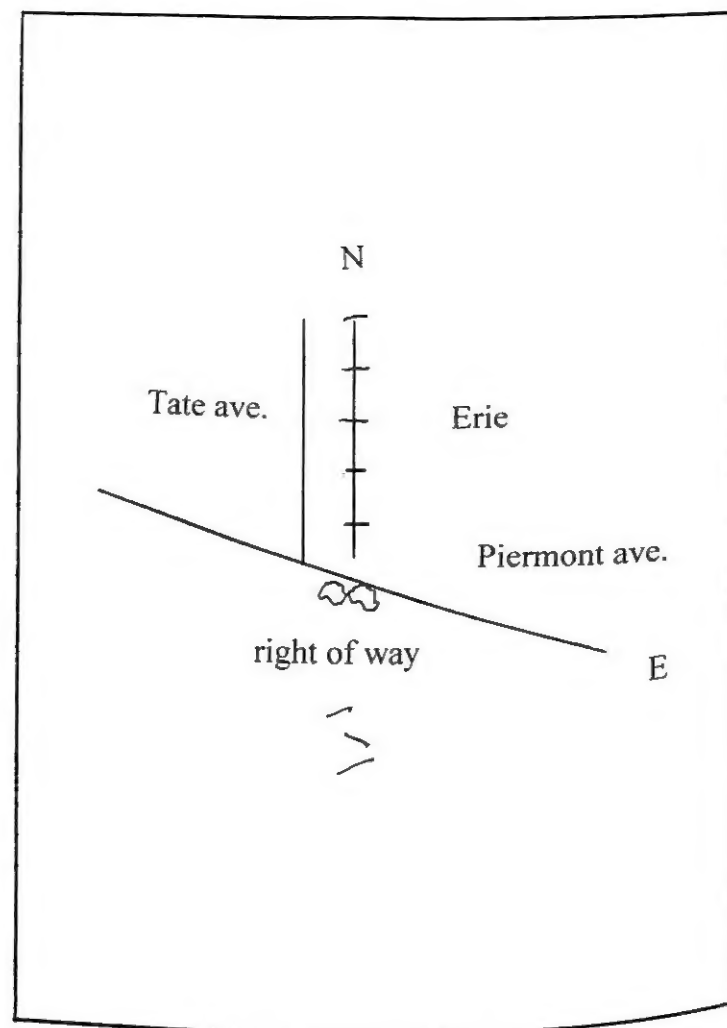
What's gone is not going to return, but that's OK, there is plenty of railroad history still around. Right of ways, abutments, line signals, and out of use structures are everywhere to be found. Now is the time to do some exploring of New Jersey's rich railroading past. How long what's left is going to last? Who knows, lets enjoy it while we can.

Charles P Caldes

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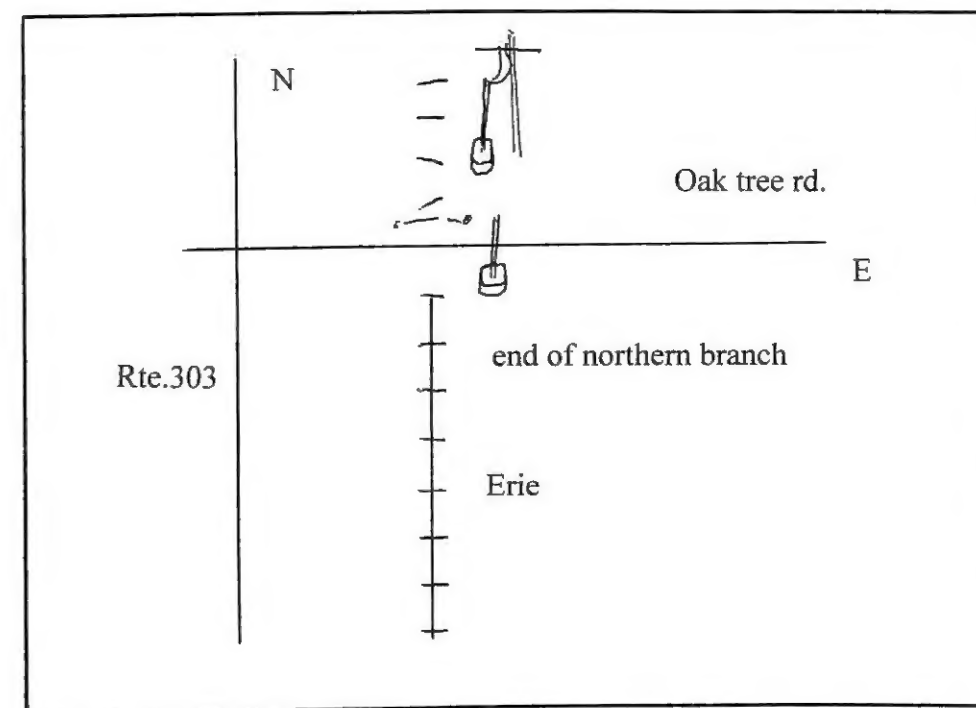
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# Piermont



Only a quaint town like Piermont would place a pair of whitewashed boulders at the base of the town's last intact rails.

# TAPPAN



The swing gate at Oak Tree Road starts the abandoned right of way that extends to Piermont. Bring your dog, skis and a lunch. This is one wide, beautiful walkway.

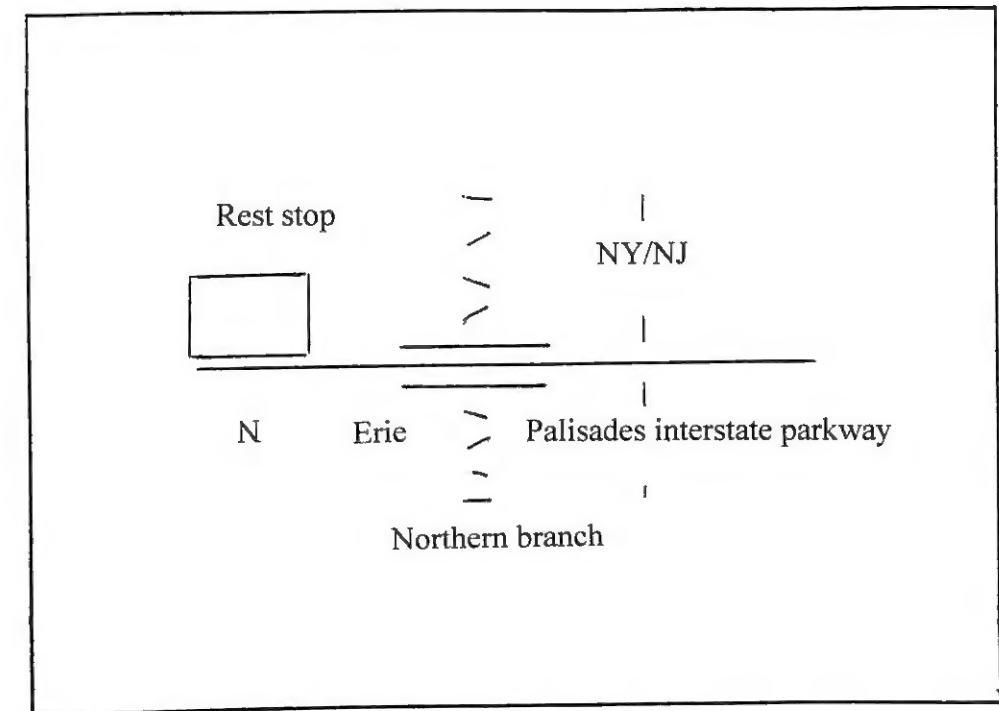




This scalped line signal is still wired, but not charged to the adjacent telephone pole.



## TAPPAN



The base and pole of the Oak Tree Road warning lights still standing, reminding all of the line's importance back when the railroads were the only way to go.

The view westward from the Palisades Interstate Parkway bridge just south of the NJ/NY border rest stop. This direction Will take you back to Tappan, head the opposite way and you Will end up at the end of the Line in Piermont on the Hudson.



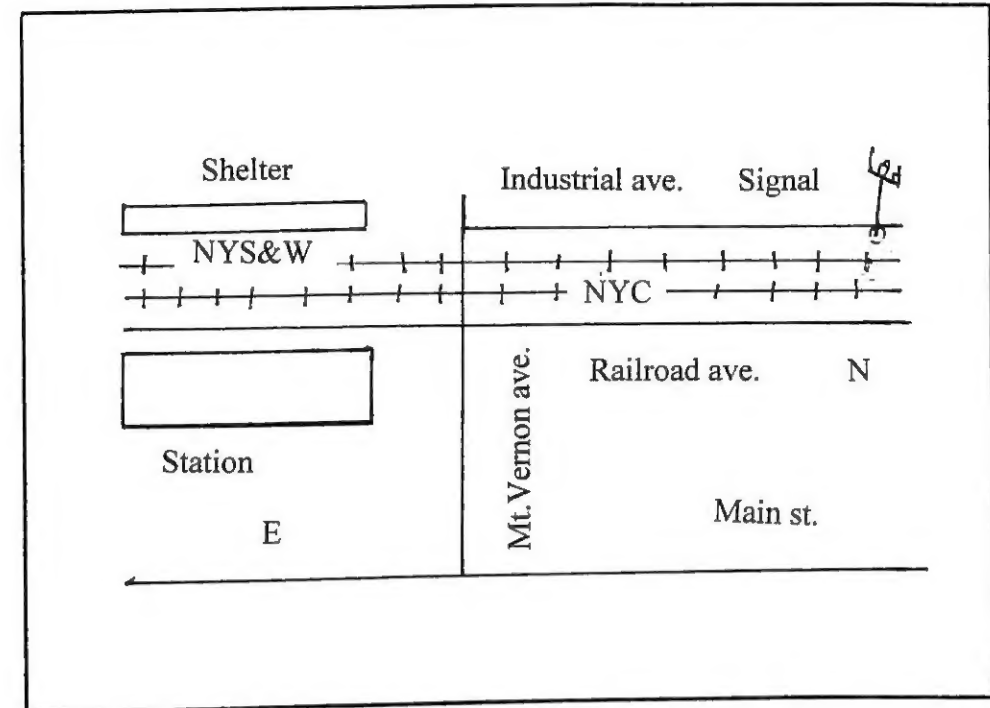
## CLOSTER



The freight house at High Street still looks structurally sound. Across the right of way is the Closter Station, now being used as a home.



## RIDGEFIELD PARK



The Ridgefield Park Railroad Station has been wonderfully restored. Now used for office space, it's a joy to see it still in use.

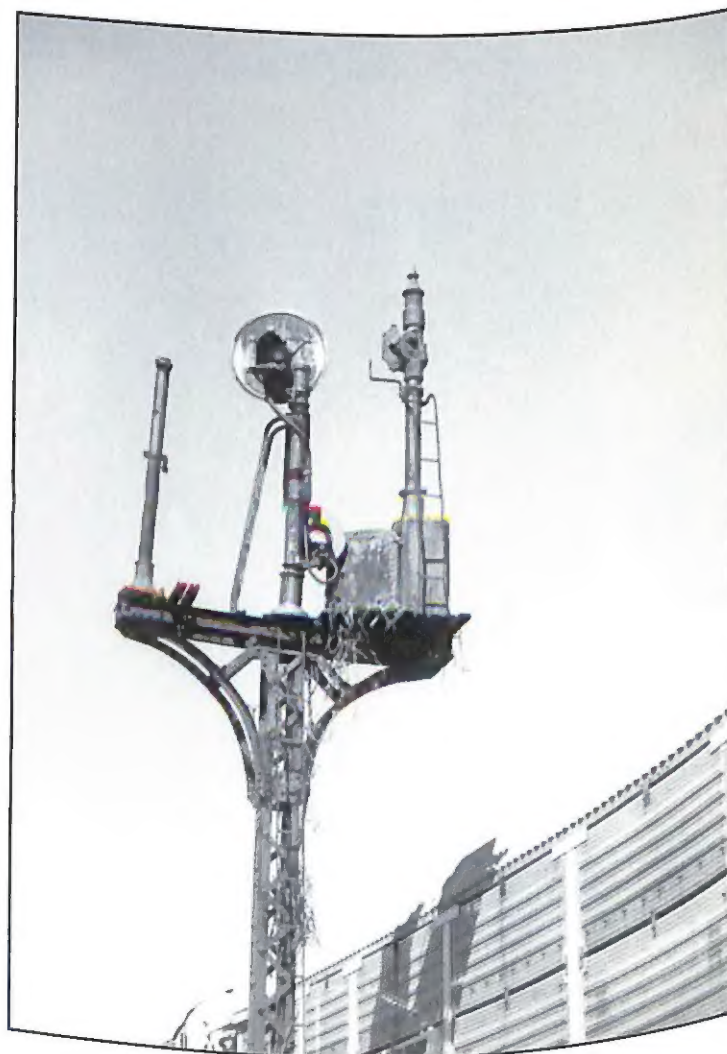




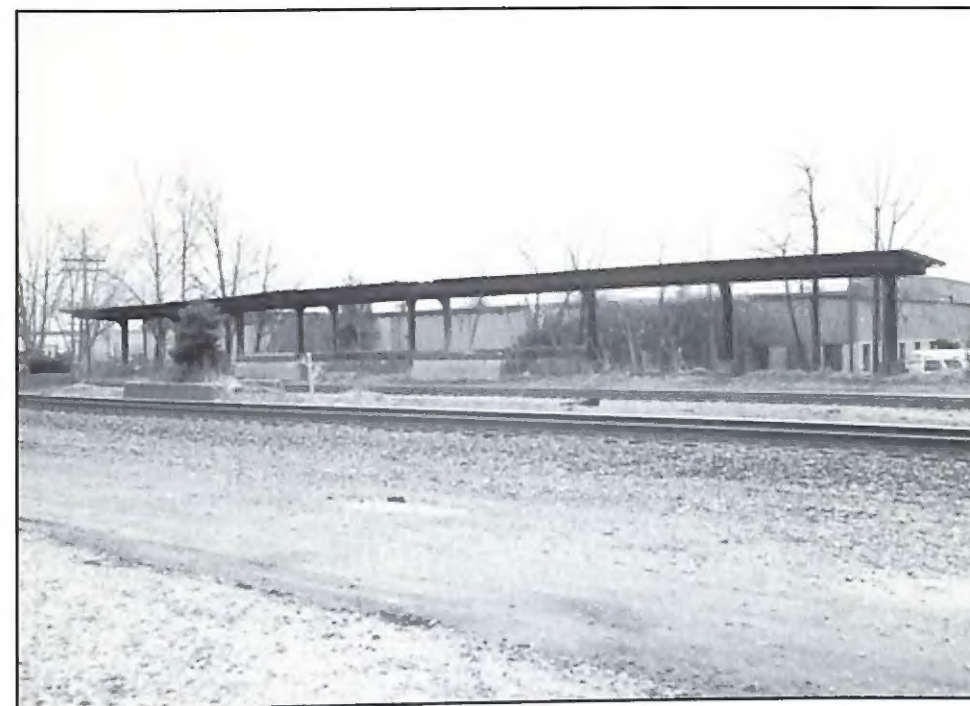
S



The restored station shelter is the match of the decaying one across the tracks. Note the Ridgefield Park sign.



North of the station on Industrial Avenue is this tower with a mix of lamp and arm signals. This platform has been around a long time. Just check out the 19th century design. It's a pleasure to see something so starkly out of place.



The NYS&W shelter west of the twin rails.

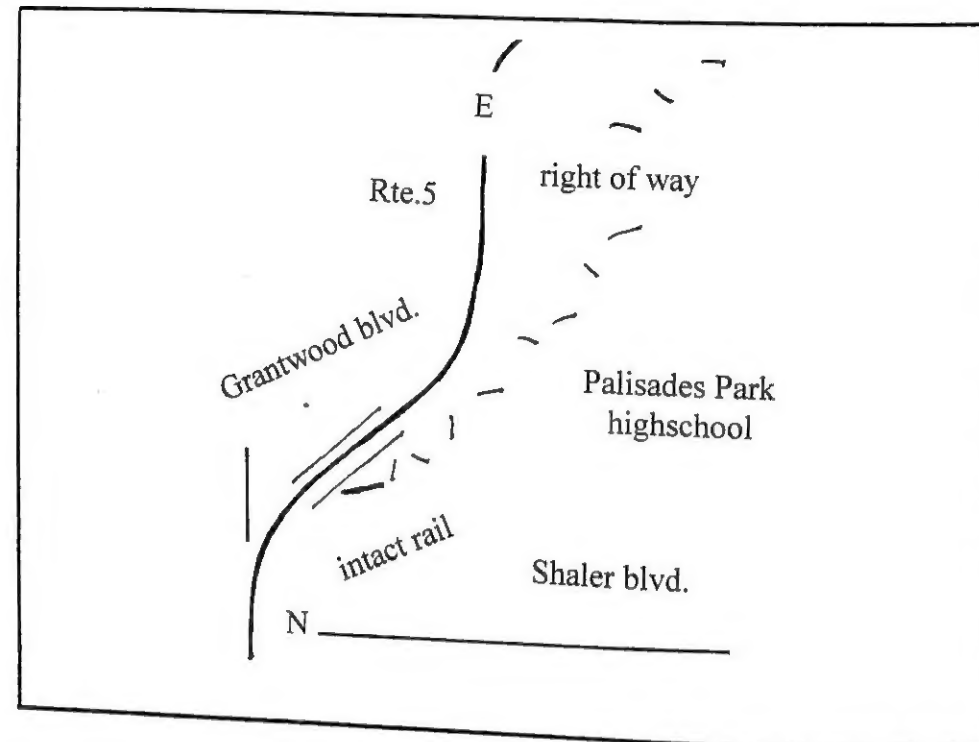


For safety reasons, the NYS&W tunnels were filled in once they were out of use. Note the metal handrail protruding above the fill.

S



# PALISADES PARK



The view west of the double track Public Service Hudson River Trolley line. Route 5 runs above, which carried the buses and cars that put the line out of business.



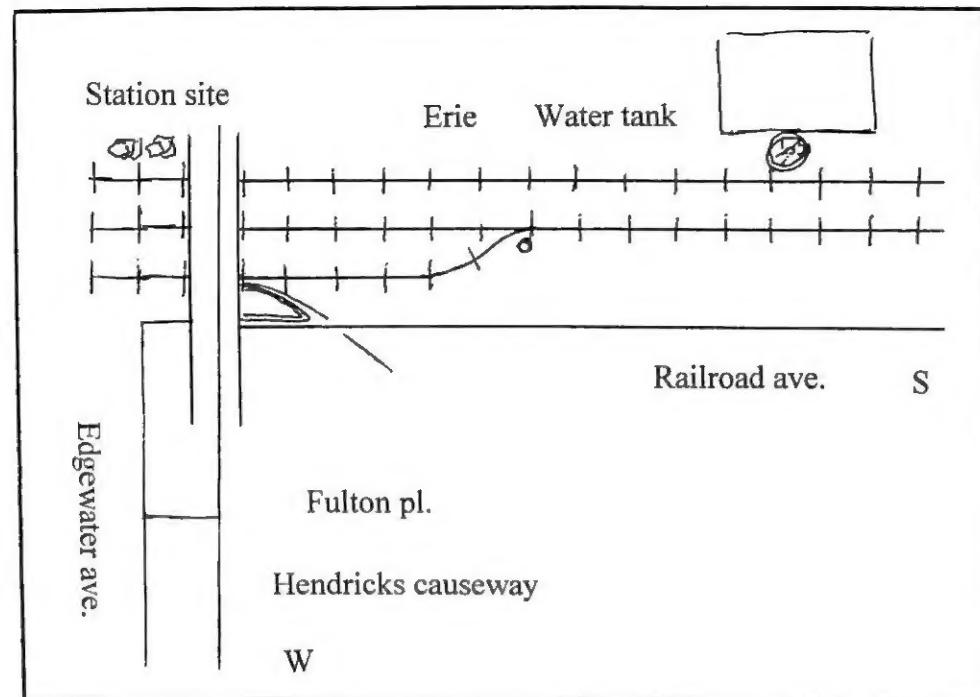
On August 5, 1938, the Hudson River Line shut down. Signals, line equipment and steel rails were all eventually carted away except this lone rail at the base of the Route 5 overpass. Maybe it was a late Friday afternoon and the work crew all had dates that night. What was the big deal? Who'd notice one strip of rail left over? It's worth the trip just to step over it.



The view east from the Route 5 overpass of the blatant right of way that climbed first to Palisades Amusement Park and then down the curves to the ferryboat terminal in Edgewater where you could get a quick ride to New York City.



# RIDGEFIELD



All that's left of the Ridgefield Station is this group of concrete platform chunks heaped about, but never carted away.



This fading from sight bumper is located south of Pleasantview Terrace, at the end of the old Ridgefield nitric acid factory's siding. Years ago, tank cars filled with acid were unloaded by hand into glass containers, something I tried doing for 15 minutes before the fumes got to me. Working at the acid factory was by far the most dangerous job of my life.



Recently tumbled, this factory water tank (Pleasantview Terrace) is one more line structure that is gone and not returning. If you're going to do some exploring, do it now before everything disappears.



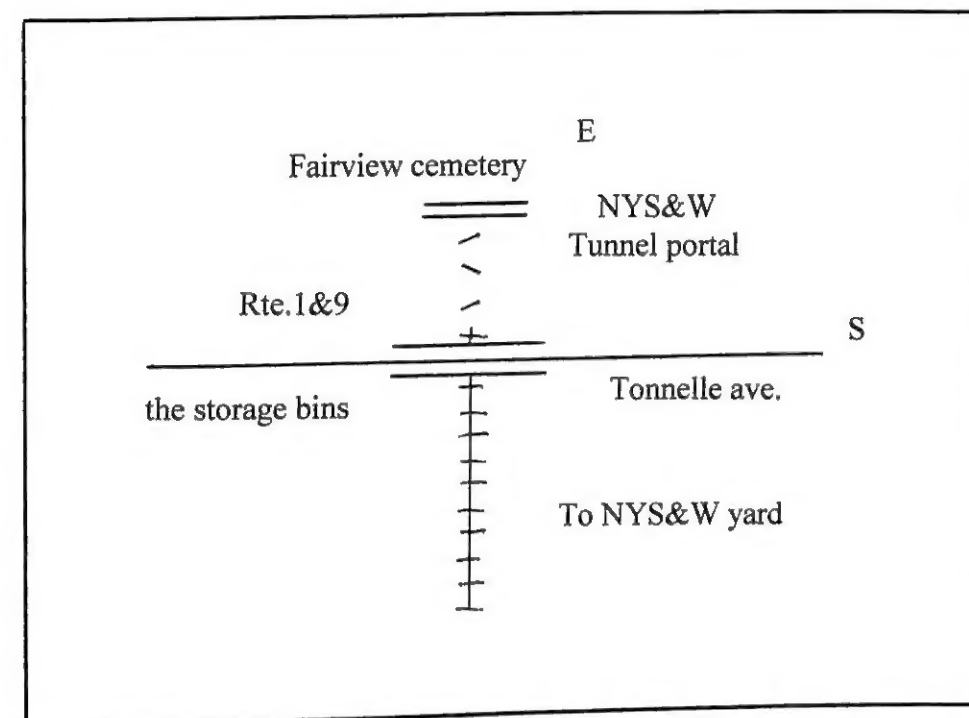
Someone put a lot of thought and effort into the design of the curbing for this turnout under Hendrick's Causeway.



Another view of the track and concrete workmanship under the Hendrick's Causeway. In the background is the Lowe Paper Company, long a major presence in Ridgely.



## Fairview



The N.Y.S.W. railroad was the only Bergen County based railroad to service the Hudson River docks. This fenced-in tunnel portal had many tons of sea cargo pass through it.



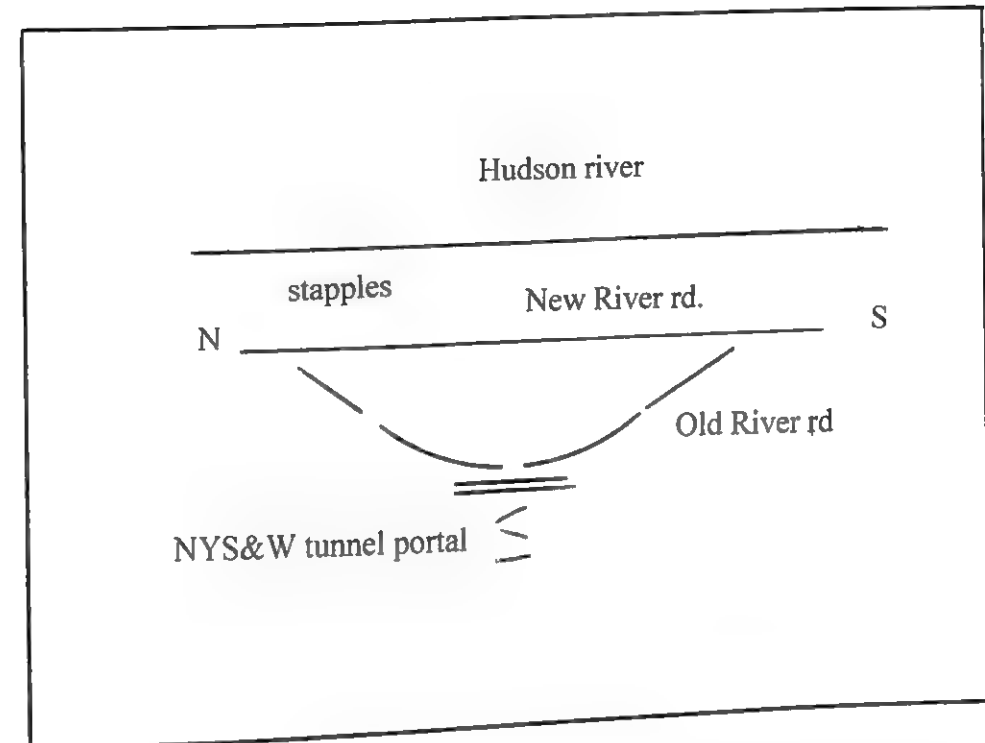


S



The view west down the NYSW right of way which lead to its yard in Ridgefield Park. Note the overhead height warning device used to prevent the can-opening of any freight cars entering the tunnel.

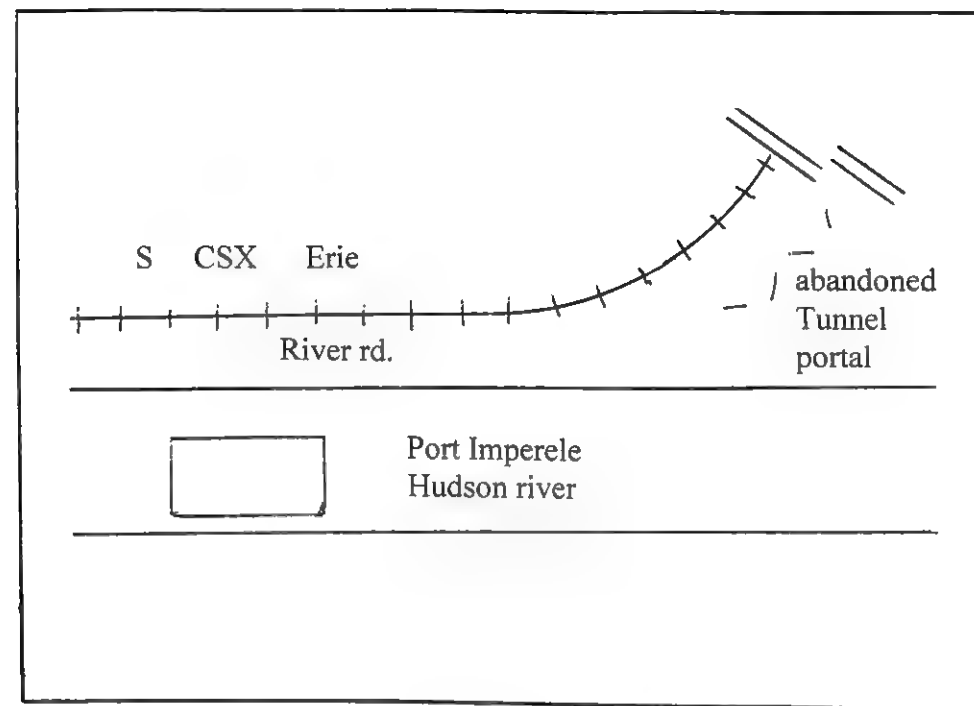
## EDGEWATER



The eastern portal of the N.Y.S.W. one-track tunnel opened up to the Hudson River and the commerce jammed along her shores. This was one well-built portal. This brickwork will last a few hundred years. That was how it was planned and built, but to no avail.

S



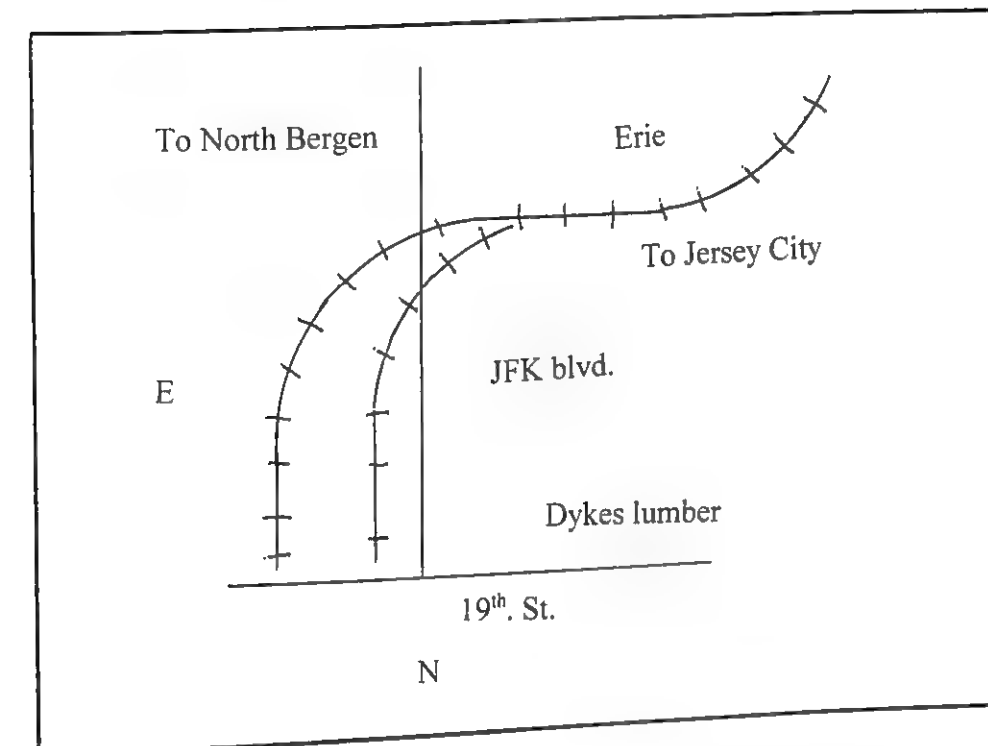


## WEEHAWKEN

The Weehawken Tunnel area now open to the public was at one time a large yard that saw heavy freight and passenger action, now a mere track operated by CSX. Note the abandoned portal to the right, its tracks gone, but standing confidently knowing they don't fill tunnels in once they are out of use.



## WEEHAWKEN

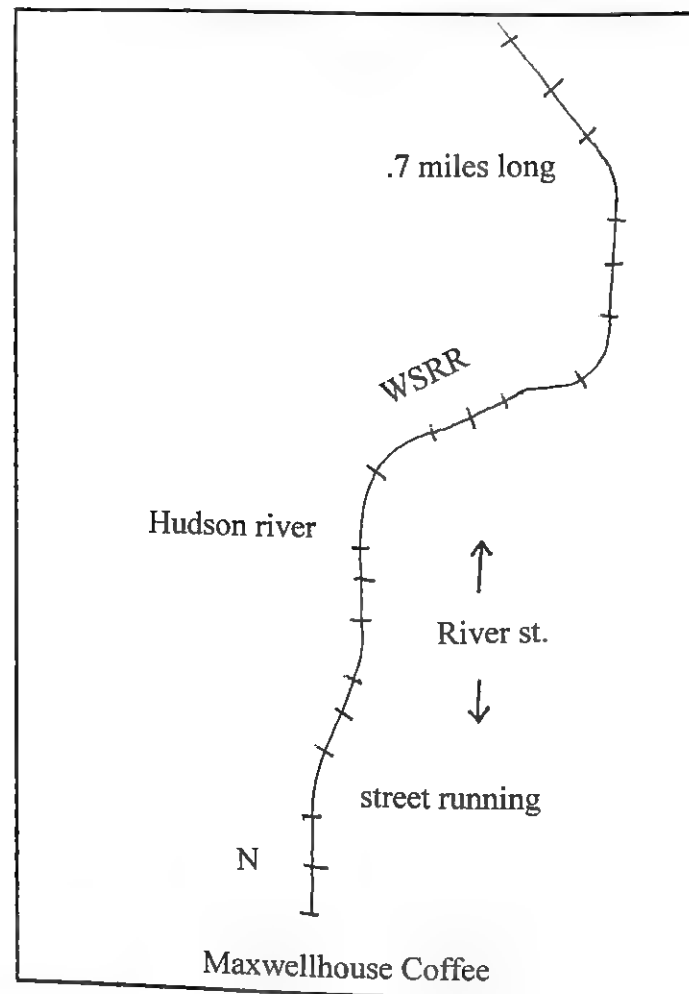


Off the Eries main line into Weehawken, the Dykes lumber siding lies dormant, covered with trash. This is Weehawken's last siding. Times change.





# HOBOKEN



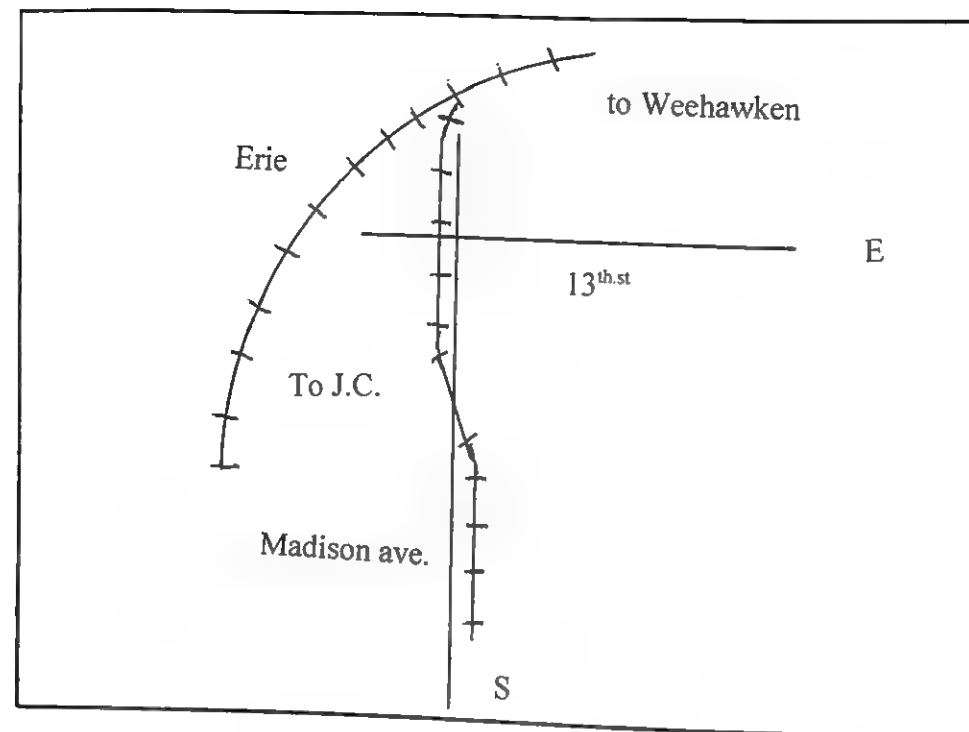
The first curve southbound finds the river street line switching over to the western portion of the road. Check out the New York City skyline.



The view north where the Maxwell House plant once saturated the area with the aroma of coffee. Here the line ran on the eastern side of River Street.



Out of the next southbound curve, the rails ran right down the middle of the street. You can spot the turnouts that led to the many piers that serviced ships from around the world.



## HOBOKEN

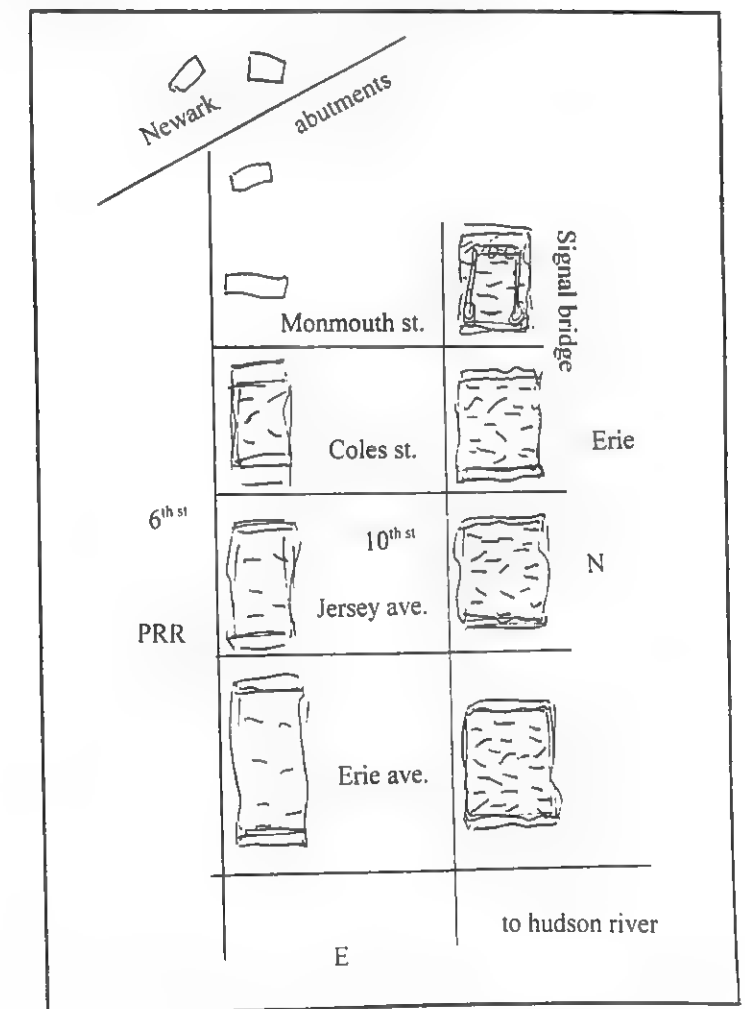


Running southbound off the Erie main line is Hoboken's last siding. Running on its own right of way a few blocks to a small plant. And it's out of use. How could a port town let it happen?



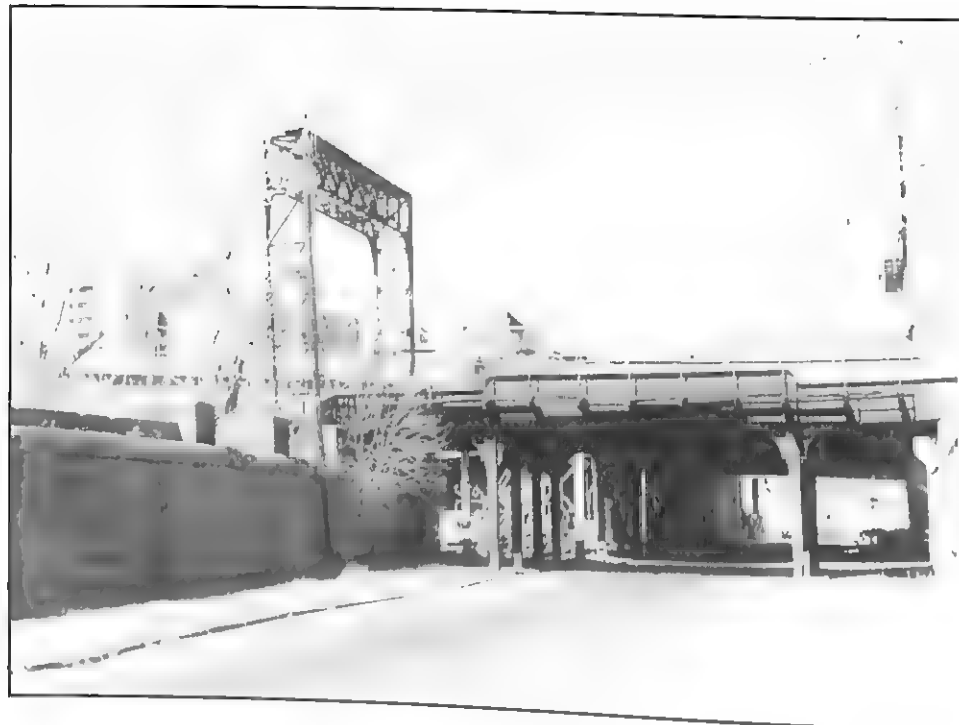
Out of place, the 10th Street signal bridge is a stark reminder of the Erie's heavy passenger traffic when Jersey City had hundreds of trains crisscrossing it daily.

## JERSEY CITY

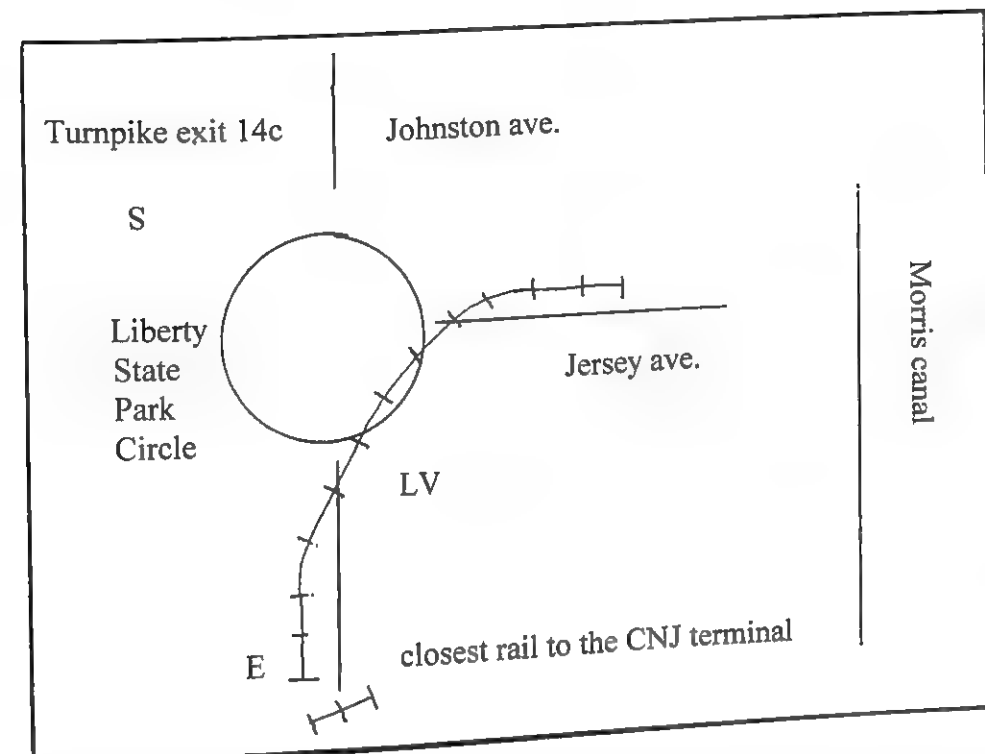




## JERSEY CITY



Looking up at the signal bridge from Monmouth Avenue, you might catch yourself waiting for the green and the rush of a roaring Pacific lead passenger train.



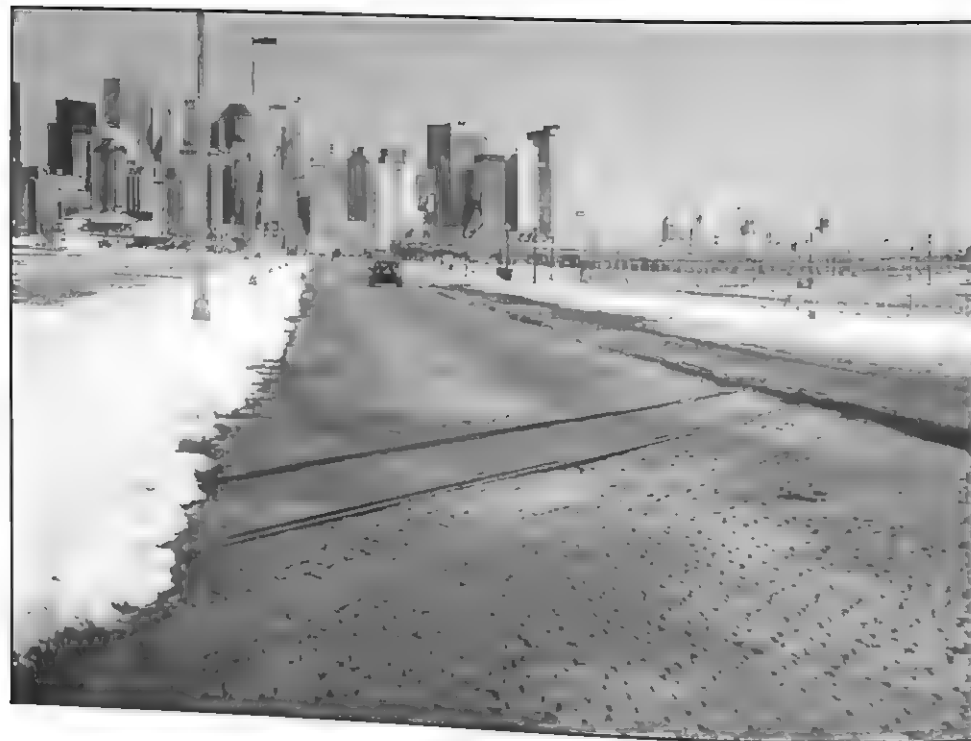
No longer rail connected to the rest of the world, the once-hectic sheds of the CNJ terminal present a sight to behold. You have a day's outing exploring this historic area. (Look over the accompanying map to imagine what this area looked like 60 years ago).



Off of Newark Avenue, a clump of PRR abutments still stand, too massive to cart away.

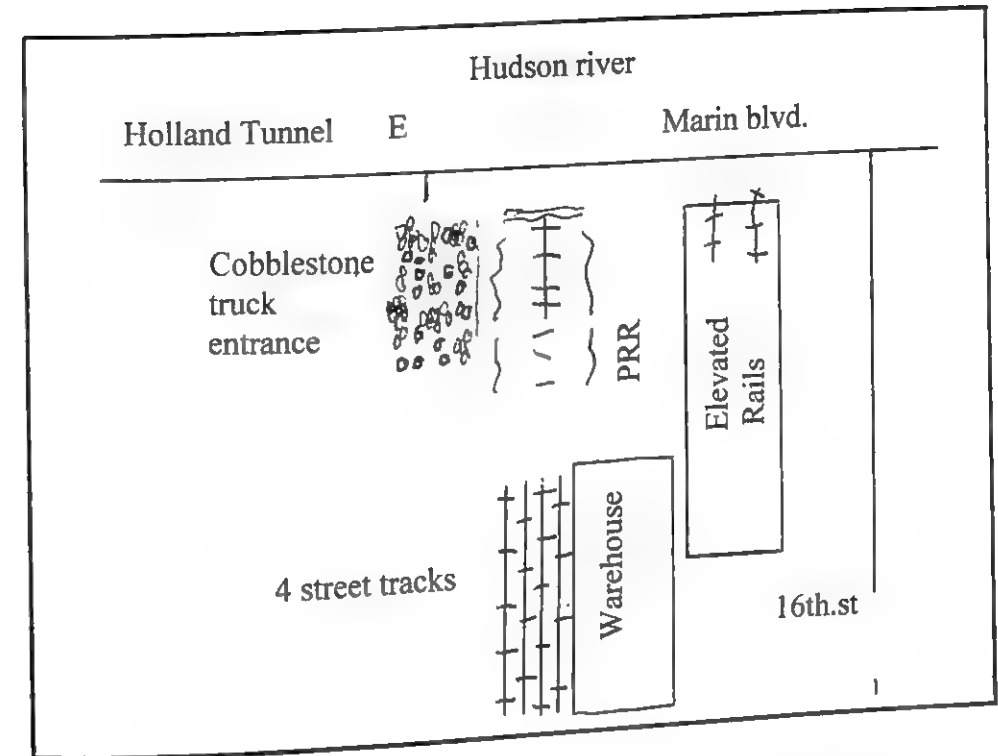


Lehigh Valley Railroad

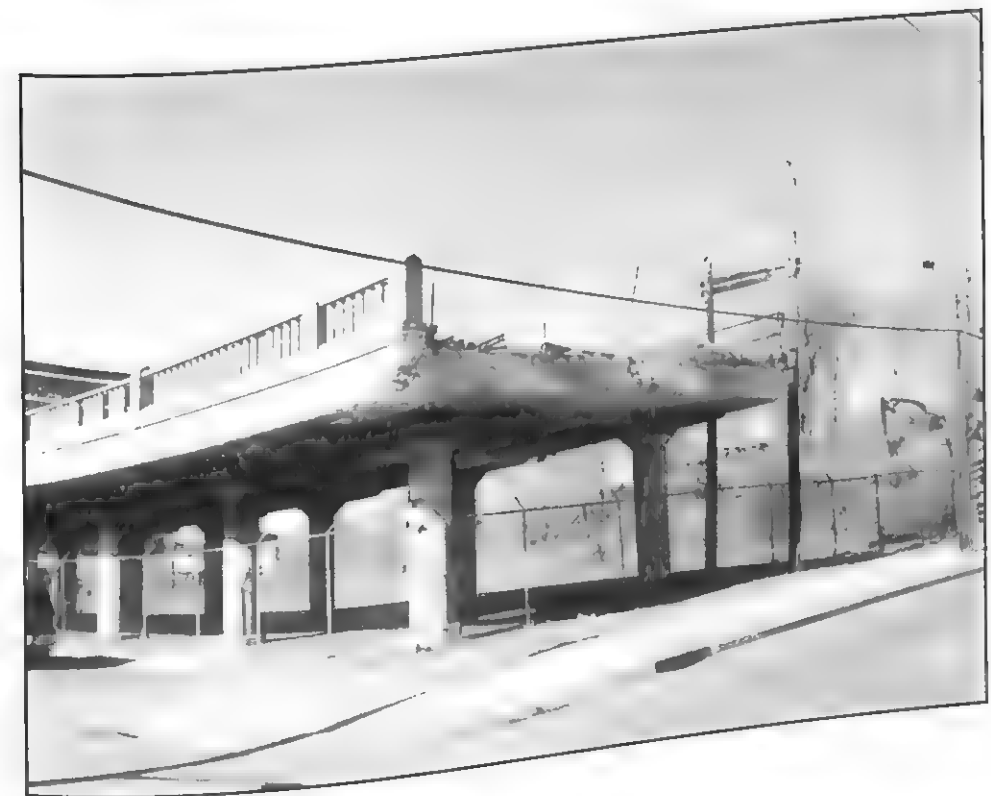


This is as close as the rails get to the terminal now.

Located at the circle leading to the CNJ terminal in Liberty State Park, this spur ran north handling the factories that filled the area.



At the foot of 16th Street and Mairin Blvd., an elegant elevated multitrack viaduct serviced a huge warehouse. This was once connected to the dock area of the PRR. Note the steel rails extending over the edge.



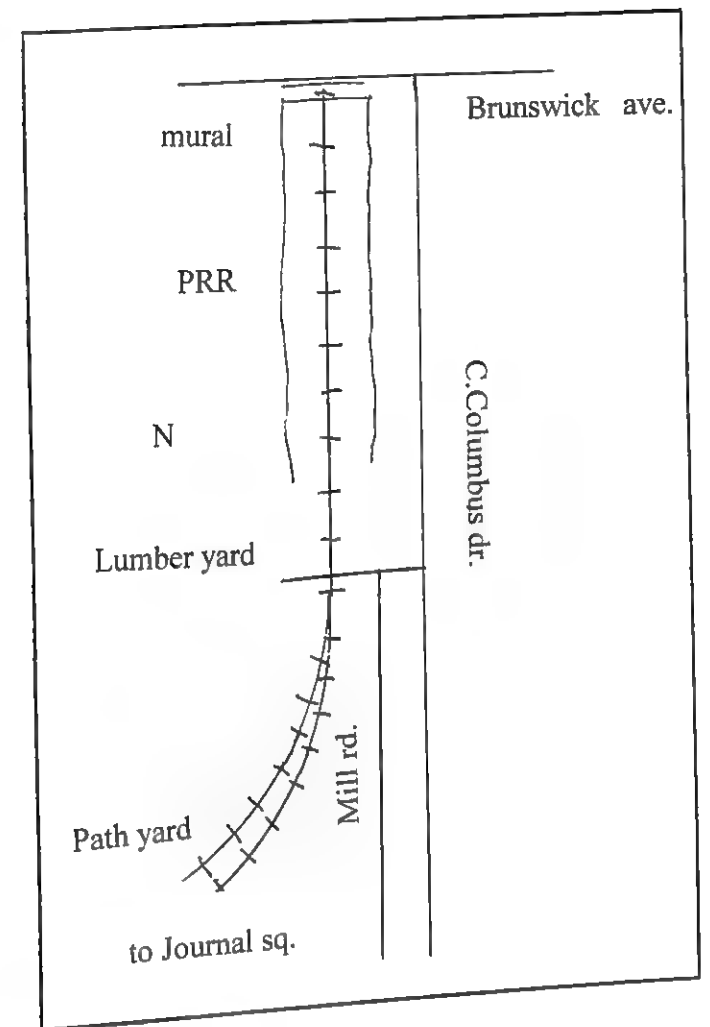




The abutment at Brunswick Avenue and C. Columbus Drive is as far east as the recently abandoned nave line out of Journal Square goes.

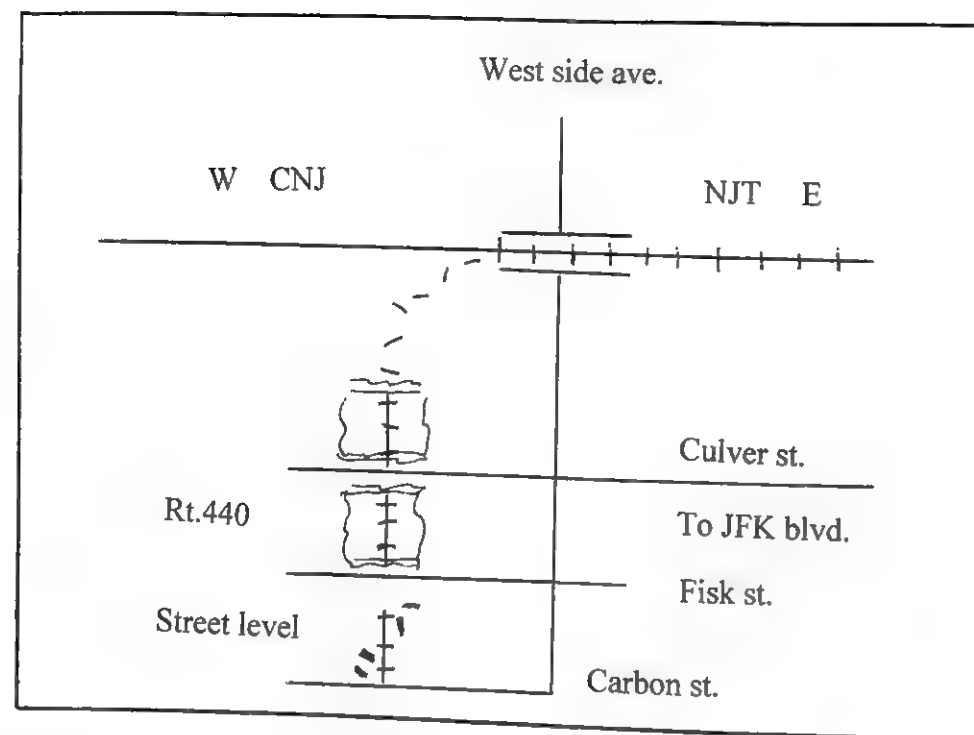


Next to the concrete viaduct, another less stylish raised line shows off its rails to anyone willing to make the climb.



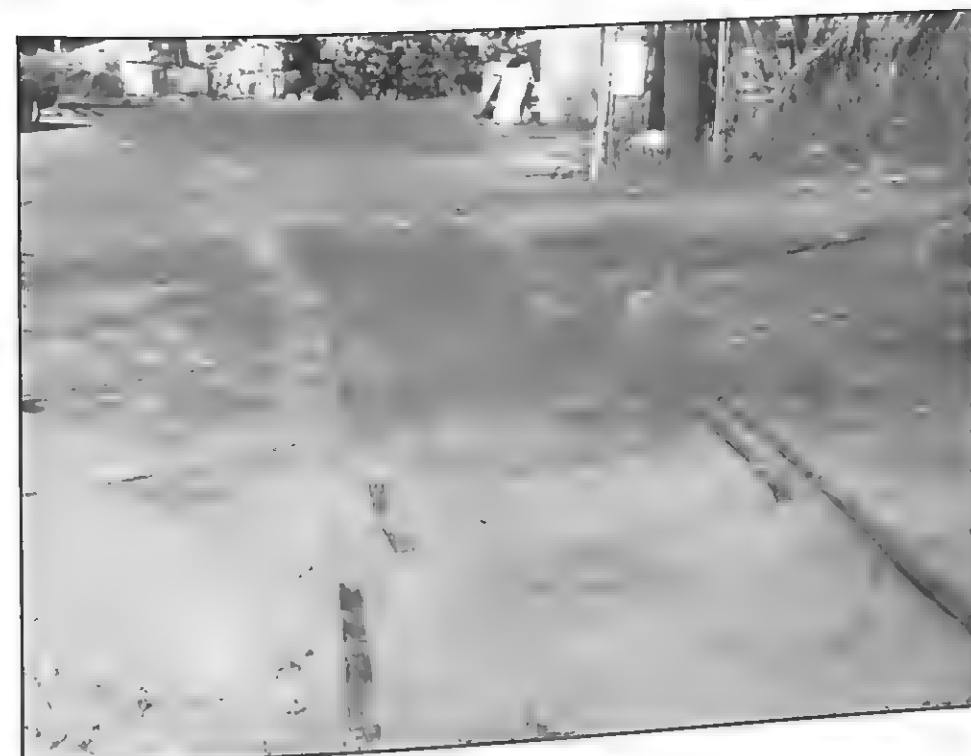
The view north into the compact path yard east of the Journal Square Station complex.

**PATH**



## JERSEY CITY

A fence in place to keep this Carbon street factory's siding safe and secure. The right of way quickly gains elevation to reach the raised CNJ line to the Hudson River, once again in use by New Jersey Transit as a spur to the West Side ave. Area.

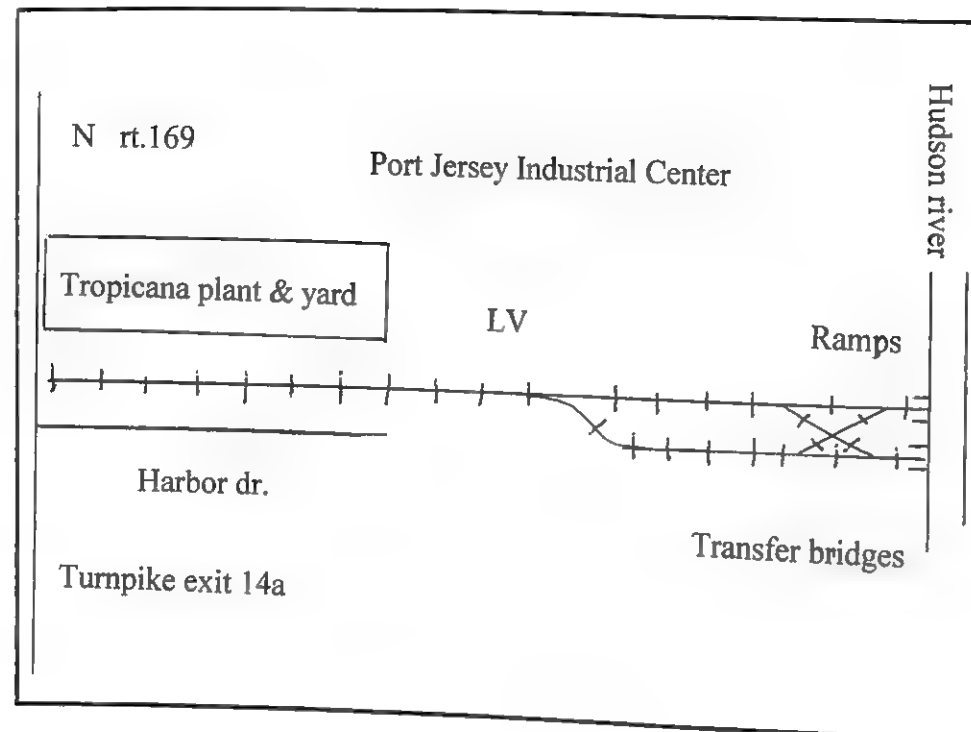


This crossover on Carbon st. was tarred over a few years ago, one of the cities last. The CNJ did a lot of business here in the old days.

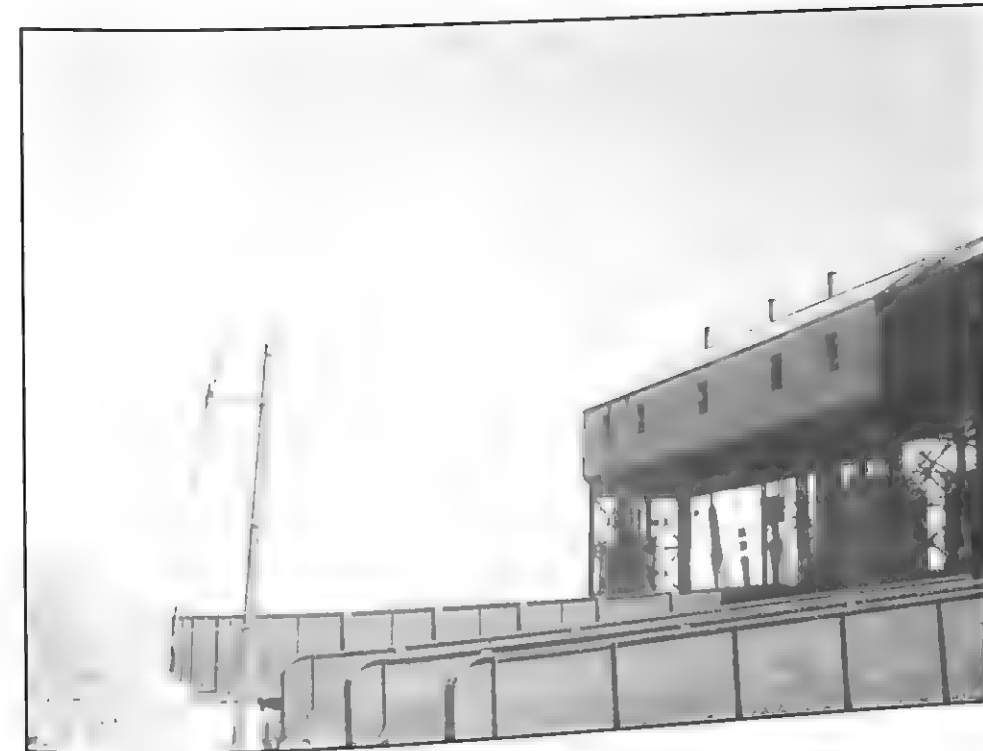


Parallel to West Side ave. , a spur ran to service the many industries along the line. This abutment on Fisk ave. is one of the last standing.

# JERSEY CITY



Still in use by the Crossharbor Railroad, there's plenty of abandoned goodies here. A major Hudson River icon for decades, the train ferry dock is the west side's last.

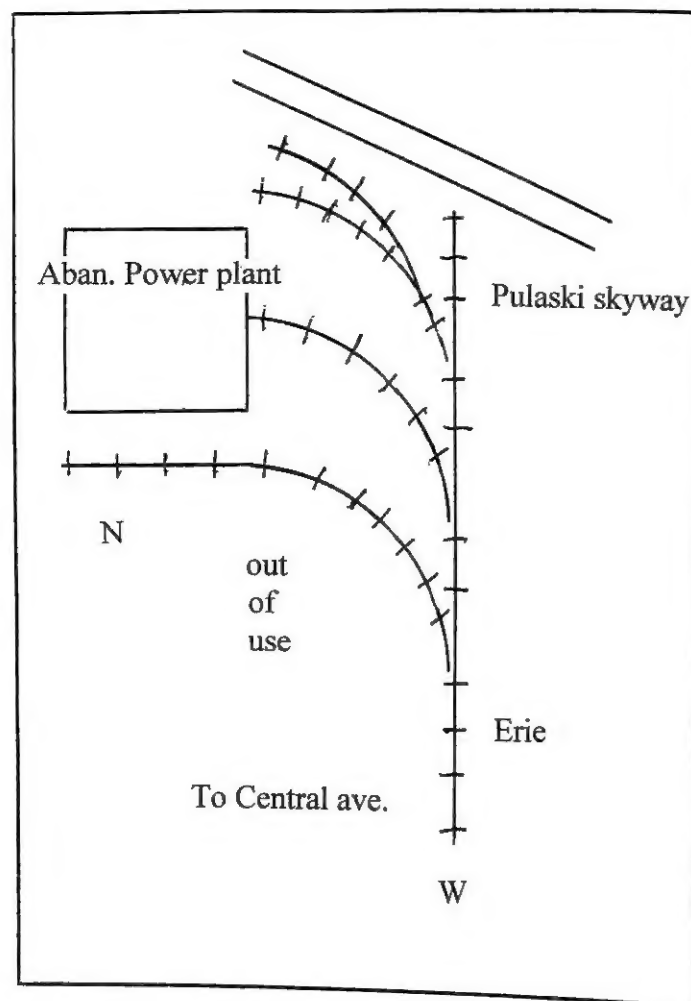


A pair of out of use double ramps, perhaps one day to be used again.



Here's a closeup of the structure's working parts.



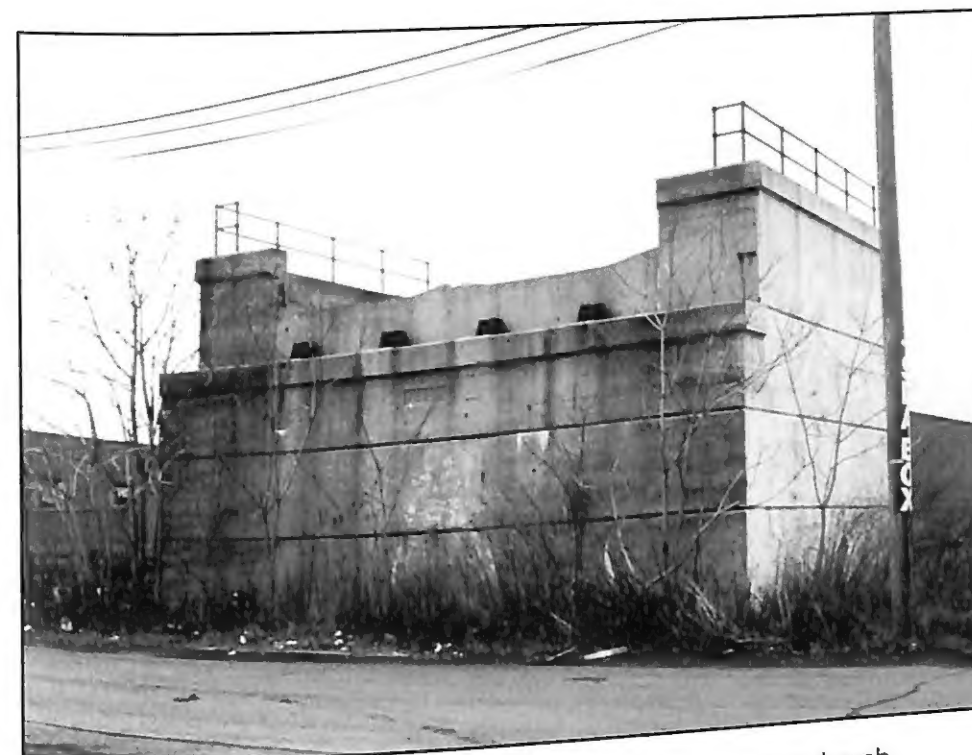


KEARNY

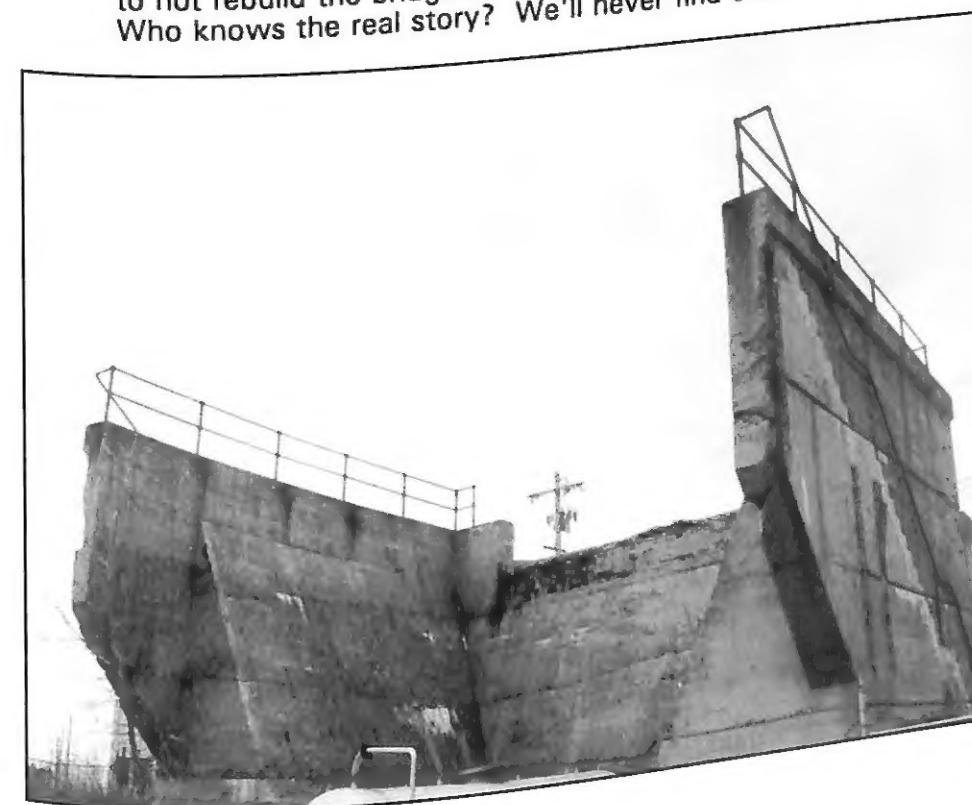
With ties rotting under the weight of the rails, this siding still presents a distinctive right of way that fit in just right with such a proper structure as the closed power plant.

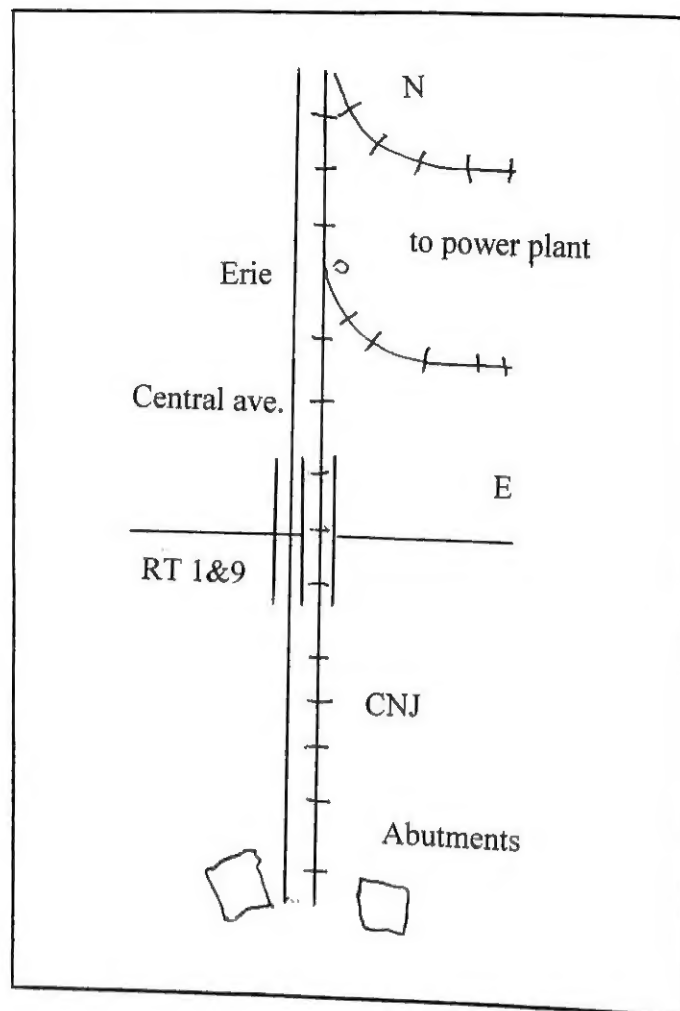


CRR of NJ



These monster abutments built to survive a nuclear bomb are located south of Route I-9 along Central Avenue. They once connected with the line to the CNJ terminal on the Hudson. Once this line carried thousands of workers a day to the Western Electric Plant till a barge hit the Hackensack River railroad bridge. The Corps of Army Engineers decided to not rebuild the bridge to safeguard the barge traffic. Who knows the real story? We'll never find out.





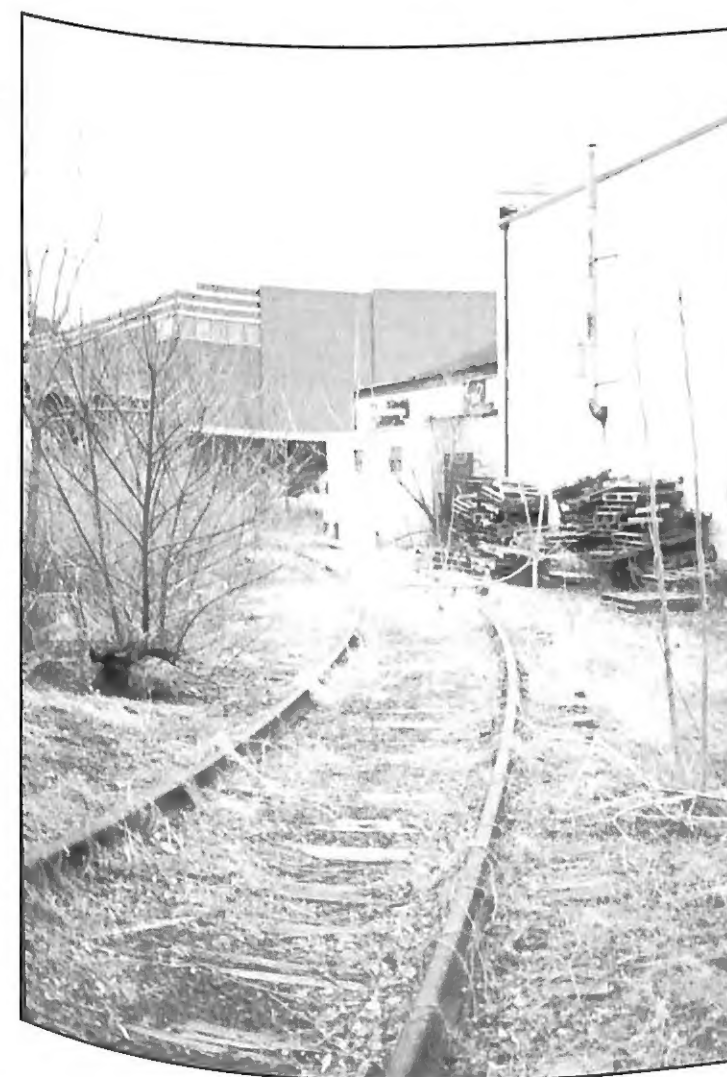
KEARNY



This is where the active line ends.  
Here trains still back into the spur.  
A few hundred feet further, the  
line is out of use.



Fed by rail, this power plant finally gave in to its outdated  
design. Note the elevated Pulaski Skyway.



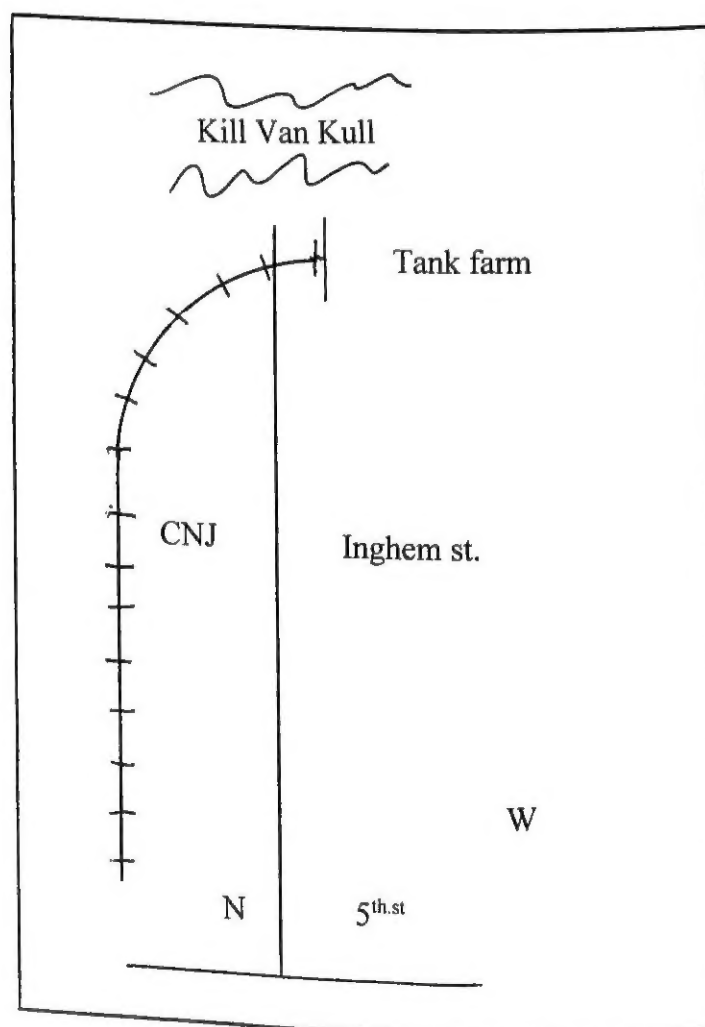
Take a look at the trees rising  
between the rotting ties and it  
quickly becomes obvious this  
siding off of Central Avenue  
hasn't felt the weight of a boxcar  
in years.





## BAYONNE

At the end of Inghams Street, A timeless scene exists where curved track meets the Kill Van Kull. Bayonne, perhaps New Jerseys finest medium sized town, has held its own railroad-wise with nearly all of its track-age in use. A few abandoned spurs exist such as this one that had serviced the fenced-in tank farm to the right.



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